

REMARKS

The present Amendment amends claims 21-28, 38 and 42 and leaves claims 29-37, 40, 41, 43 and 44 unchanged. Therefore, the present application has pending claims 21-44.

Claims 24 and 25 stand objected to due to informalities noted by the Examiner in paragraph 3 of the Office Action. Amendments were made to claims 24 and 25 to correct the informalities noted by the Examiner. Therefore, this objection is overcome and should be withdrawn.

Claims 21-44 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Takaragi (U.S. Patent No. 4,885,788) in view of Mori (U.S. Patent No. 5,659,166). This rejection is traversed for the following reasons. Applicants submit that the features of the present invention as now more clearly recited in 21-44 are not taught or suggested by Takaragi or Mori whether taken individually or in combination with each other as suggested by the Examiner. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Amendments were made to each of the claims to more clearly recite that the present invention is directed to a point management system, an IC card for use in the point management system and a method of transmitting point data to an IC card with a reader and writer of a store in association with a point management system. According to the present invention, the IC card for use in the point management system stores a card number and point data which is assigned corresponding to a use of the IC card by a customer and includes a plurality of point storage areas wherein each point storage area of a store is formed in corresponding relation to a

register store number of the store to permit the point storage area of the store to be accessed using the register store number and a crypt key.

Further, according to the present invention, the point management system includes a reference center which stores card numbers and associated customer data for customers using IC cards wherein the customer data for each customer includes a name and an address of the customer, a reader and writer which reads the card number and the point data from the IC card and transmits the card number and the point data, and an application center which is connected to the reference center and the reader and writer and which receives the card number and the point data from the reader and writer, holds the card number and the point data, conducts a lottery with respect to various customers, determines a winning customer who is the winner of the lottery as a result of the conducting the lottery, communication with the reference center using the IC card to retrieve from the reference center customer data corresponding to the winning customer, and sends a gift to an address of the winning customer based on an address included in the customer data retrieved from the reference center.

The above described features of the present invention now more clearly recited in the claims are not taught or suggested by Takaragi or Mori whether taken individually or in combination with any of the other references of record.

As argued in the Remarks of the February 9, 2004 Amendment and the Remarks of the August 5, 2004 Amendment, said Remarks being incorporated herein by reference, there are numerous differences between the features of the present invention as recited in the claims and Takaragi and Mori whether taken

individually or in combination with each other as suggested by the Examiner. In addition to these numerous differences between the features of the present invention as recited in the claims and Takaragi and Mori which have been shown time and time again in the above referenced Amendments, additional amendments were made to the claims so as to further distinguish the features of the present invention from the references of record.

These further amendments being made to the claims now more clearly recite that the IC card is used in association with a point management system wherein the IC card stores a card number and point data, a reference center is provided which stores the card numbers and associated customer data for customers using IC cards wherein the customer data for each customer includes name and address of the customer, and an application center which is connected to the reference center and the reader and writer and which receives the card number and the point data from the reader and writer, conducts a lottery with respect to various customers, determines a winning customer, communicates with the reference center using the card number to retrieve from the reference center customer data corresponding to the winning customer, and sends a gift to an address of the winning customer. These features are clearly not taught or suggested by Takaragi and Mori.

Therefore, both Takaragi and Mori fail to teach or suggest that the IC card includes a memory storing a card number and point data which is assigned corresponding to a use of the IC card by a customer as recited in the claims.

Further, both Takaragi and Mori fails to teach or suggest a reference center which stores card numbers and associated customer data for customers using IC

cards, wherein the customer data for each customer includes a name and an address of the customer as recited in the claims.

Still further, both Takaragi and Mori fail to teach or suggest an application center which is connected to the reference center and the reader and writer and which receives the card number and the point data from the reader and writer, holds the card number and the point data, conducts a lottery with respect to various customers, determines a winning customer who is the winner of the lottery as a result of the conducting the lottery, communicates with the reference center using the card number to retrieve from the reference center customer data corresponding to the winning customer, and sends a gift to an address of the winning customer based on an address included in the customer data retrieved from the reference center as recited in the claims.

Therefore, as is quite clear from the above, the features of the present invention as now more clearly recited in the claims are not taught or suggested by Takaragi or Mori whether taken individually or in combination with each other as suggested by the Examiner. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 USC §103(a) rejection of claims 21-44 as being unpatentable over Takaragi in view of Mori is respectfully requested.

The remaining references of record have been studied. Applicants submit that they do not supply any of the deficiencies noted above with respect to the references utilized in the rejection of claims 21-44.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, applicants submit that claims 21-44 are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, early allowance of claims 21-44 is respectfully requested.

To the extent necessary, the applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, or credit any overpayment of fees, to the deposit account of MATTINGLY, STANGER, MALUR & BRUNDIDGE, P.C., Deposit Account No. 50-1417 (501.36884X00).

Respectfully submitted,

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